

# **THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF LOS ALTOS HILLS**

January 6, 2005

Members of the City Council  
Town of Los Altos Hills  
25890 Fremont Road  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

**Subject: Public Education Survey - Final Report**

Your Honorable Members of the City Council:

With this letter, we submit the Final Report for the public education survey conducted by Godbe Research in September, 2004. You may recall that the Executive Summary of this report was originally presented at the October 7, 2004 City Council meeting by Godbe Research, using a Powerpoint presentation. This Final Report elaborates on the Executive Summary with further analysis, and includes select cross-tabulation of results.

As explained in the Report, a 13-minute telephone survey of 494 respondents was conducted from September 7 through September 16, 2004. The survey contained 19 questions about public education in our community, and addressed the following topics: (1) importance of various community issues such as preserving open space, etc.; (2) satisfaction with the quality of public education; (3) awareness of the Bullis Charter School; (4) level of support for City Council committing staff and resources to return public education to town; (5) general level of support for realigning school districts in order to return a public elementary school to our town; and (6) specific level of support for three redistricting options. The survey also included 15 demographic questions.

The Public Education Committee spent many months and over 100 person-hours working with Godbe Research in the development of this survey. In May 2004, the PEC formed a Survey Subcommittee of five members to work with maximum efficiency in selecting the topics and questions. Next, the PEC and its Survey Subcommittee started developing a general list of topics that needed to be covered by the survey. In working directly with Godbe, the Subcommittee identified the specific processes by which the options of redistricting could be realized in this town, specifically, through the use of ballot measures, and then further refined the pertinent questions. Godbe's team of survey professionals led us in their methodology, and we supplied them with background information and substantive ideas. The Subcommittee worked on five drafts of the survey before it was finalized. The last draft of the survey was also reviewed by two City

Councilmembers, Breene Kerr and Bob Fenwick. Messrs. Kerr and Fenwick met with the Survey Subcommittee and with two Godbe representatives - Brian Godbe and Sean Bridge - in early September to finalize and approve the final survey. Throughout the entire process, the Subcommittee's corrections and comments to Godbe ranged from editing syntax and grammar to adding a whole section on the charter school.

When reviewing the attached Final Report, please bear in mind that:

- The report stands on its own, in its entirety, as a work product that summarizes verbal answers received during the telephone survey. Quoting portions of the report out of context is strongly discouraged due to the likelihood that any extraction will not be adequately supported by the survey data and will, therefore, not be able to withstand scrutiny.
- The telephone survey was conducted during one week in September and thus represents, at best, opinions during a particular snapshot in time. Shortly after the survey was completed, the City Council and public learned that the Los Altos School District had leased portions of Bullis-Purissima Elementary School to private pre-schools. This action, as well as the Council's and Bullis Charter School's reactions, all received media attention, the effect of which could not be captured by the survey.
- One of the Report's conclusions on page 8 needs emphasis here, and that is that **educating voters helps increase support for re-districting**. The very format of the survey validates this conclusion, in that support for each of the redistricting measures *increased* after respondents heard the pros and cons of each measure.
- Another conclusion found on page 8 is that an overwhelming majority of voters in Los Altos Hills supported the Town's spending resources to bring public elementary education back to our town.
- One of Godbe's recommendations is that the City Council and staff should commit town resources to educate the public on the impact of the various options tested by the survey, and to explore other ways to return public education to our town.
- Each question contains a unique margin of error depending on the number and distribution of responses. As explained in more detail on pages 11-12 of this report, the maximum margin of error ranged between 2.58 and 4.29 percent for each question.
- Among the demographic answers, it is interesting to note that although the survey concerned public education for our children, the majority of respondents (56.9%) did **not** have any children under the age of 19 living at home. It is also interesting to note that of those households with

children at home, less than half (49.3%) had children in public school. Approximately 40% of households have at least one child in private school (see pages 48 and 50 of the Report).

As always, we are available to answer any questions you may have concerning this Report, the Survey or any other topic related to our work. Please direct your questions to the entire PEC rather than to any one individual on the committee.

Very Truly Yours,

The Public Education Committee

Roger Burnell (Chair), Edward Emling, Kathy Evans, Steve Hubbell, Jill Jensen,  
Kathleen Justice-Moore, Nancy Kelem, Jamie Lucia, Duncan MacMillan,  
John Radford, John Swan